

# THE CORRESPONDENT.

MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PREVALEBIT.

BY GEORGE HOUSTON, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

### EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

*Account of the ancient fathers, continued.*—The authors of the two first centuries have been dignified as fathers of the church, and whose writings or notices of them are supposed to have reached us, are Barnabas, who is said to have written about A. D. 71. Clemens Romanus 96. The shepherd of Hermas 100. St. Ignatius 107. Polycarp 108. Papias, known only by some extracts in Eusebius, 116. Justin Martyr 140. Tatian 172. Hegisippus 173. Melito 177. The epistles to Vienne and Lyons 177. Irenæus 178 or 180. Athenagoras 178. Theophilus of Antioch 181. Pantæus 192. All these dates are conjectural: settled upon what Christian writers deem probabilities, with no certain evidence to guide us to the most part of them.

Justin Martyr died 163. Irenæus 202. Clemens Alexandrinus 220. Origen 259. Cyprian 258. Lactantius wrote about 311. Eusebius Pamphilus died 340. Athanasius died 371. Cyrill 386. Basil 378. Gregory of Nyssa 395. Ambrose 397. Chrysostom 407. Jerom 420. Augustin 430. Beyond these it is not worth while to enumerate. By this time the orthodox faith, not much different from what is so called in modern days, was fully established, under the sanction of imperial authority.

For the accounts I give of the writers of the two first centuries, I refer generally to Vidal's translation of Mosheim de rebus Christianis ante Const. mag.—to the two first volumes of Dr. Jortin's remarks on ecclesiastical history—to the eccles. hist. of Lewis Ellis Dupin—and to the "Free Enquiry" of Dr. Conyers Middleton, whose accuracy of references has never been attacked, by the most inveterate of his opponents. These are books not difficult to be procured: they are books composed by Christian writers of established character. The treatise of Barbeyrac (the French translator of Grotius de jure belli et pacis) sur la morale des peres de l'ancien Eglise, I presume no learned man, no lawyer at least, will hesitate to admit.

**BARNABAS.** There is an epistle, says Dr. Jortin (vol. 1. page 217) ascribed to Barnabas; we cannot certainly tell by whom it was written. If it really were written by St. Paul's companion, there are internal characters in it, that incline us to judge that he was not at that time under any particular guidance of the holy spirit. Jortin ib. page 218, 219.

**CLEMENS ROMANUS.** Two epistles in Greek are ascribed to this writer, of which the first may be considered genuine in the main, but greatly interpolated; the latter very questionable. Other forged writings attributed to him, are eight books of the apostolic constitutions: a set of apostolic canons: the recognitions of St. Clement: the homilies of St. Clement: Mosheim de reb. chr. vol. 1, page 270 of Vidal. Clemens urges the story of the phenix as a true story, and a type and proof of the resurrection from the dead. Who Clement was, is by no means settled. Wake's ap. fath. prelim. disc. § 7.

**THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS.** Is a production dating about the middle of the second century, falsely ascribed to Hermas, brother to Pius, said to have been bishop of Rome about the close of the first century; but this is all uncertain. "The shepherd of Hermas, so called, (says Mosheim) ib. 284, contains such an admixture of folly and superstition with piety, such a ridiculous association of egregious nonsense with things momentous and useful, that to me (Mosheim) it appears clearly to be the work of some disordered fanatic; or of some man who from a pious motive conceived himself authorised in pretending to have derived his maxims and precepts from conversations with God and the angels." How archbishop Wake could gravely publish the apostolical fathers for the edification of pious Christians, no one but an orthodox churchman can explain.

**IGNATIUS.** (Vidal's Mosheim, vol. 1, page 274) "There are extant several epistles with the name of Ignatius prefixed to them, but their authenticity has been much disputed. The prevailing opinion however, is in favor of six of them." Mosheim says six or seven of them have in them *something of a genuine cast* (page 276, note k) but under the present circumstances, let us endeavor what we may, we shall never exonerate these letters from suspicion of corruption and interpolation: the question of their genuineness remains undecided (page 277.)

Vol. 2, page 51. The acts of Martyrdom of St. Ignatius are interpolated. But the dreams and visions of his friends, and indeed the whole story is incredible. Archbishop Wake has inserted it in his apostolical fathers, and a good companion it is to the pastor of Hermas. Any man of common sense who has not a cause to serve will agree with Mosheim that the whole story is incredible.

**POLYCARP.** Vidal's Mosheim, vol. 1, page 278. Of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, we have an epistle to the Philippians, considered by some as spurious, by others as genuine. Mosheim considers it as corrupted, interpolated, and containing passages trifling, absurd, and contradictory. (Ib. note l.) The lying wonders detailed of his martyrdom, may be found in Jortin rem. on ecc. hist. 333. It requires a very full share of orthodox faith to credit them. How archbishop Wake could reconcile it to his conscience to leave out the miracle of the dove, I cannot tell: more especially as he declares Bishop Usher's Ms. which contains it, to be too well attested to be doubted. I do not know much difference between the pious frauds of purposed omission lest the truth should be suspected, and purposed interpolation to gain credit to a pious story. See Dr. Middleton's Free Enquiry, page 154, &c.

**PAPIAS.** *Supposed* to be a disciple of John and Bishop of Hierapolis: he is little known, except from what Eusebius has collected concerning him. I object generally to the testimonies of Eusebius, as a professed forger, fabricator, interpolator, and deceiver. *Credat Judæus Apella, non ego*: let the orthodox Christian give credit to this historian, I give none; unless where the facts are credible in themselves, and can serve no pious fraud: if they can, the ready lie is at the end of his pen. Dr. Whitby, whose learning and fairness stands deservedly high, joins Irenæus with Papias (*Præfat. ad strictur. Patr. page 73*) "It is very remarkable (says Whitby) that these two earliest writers of the second century, who on the credit of idle reports, and uncertain fame, have delivered to us things said to be done by the apostles and their scholars, and have shamefully imposed upon us by the forgery of fables and false stories." Eusebius, to my surprise, speaks of Papias much in the language of Dr. Whitby as to his fables and forgeries, and calls him a weak and silly man. *Euseb. hist. ecc. lib. 3, ch. 39.*

The SYBILLINE VERSES are considered as a forgery of Papias.

Here ends the list of what are called the APOSTOLICAL FATHERS. Archbishop Wake's translation of what he is pleased to call their genuine epistles, with the accounts of the martyrdom of Ignatius and Polycarp, (equally veracious) has undergone five or six editions, greatly to the edification of all pious and orthodox old women, and not much to the honor of the pious and right reverend translator.

The Christian gospels, if they can be authenticated, must be authenticated by the references to them, and by the acknowledgement of them and appeals to them of writers near to their times, and when the publication of these gospels would naturally create much conversation, much citation, and much public interest in all Christian churches, and among all pious Christians. The poor, tasteless drivellers whom I have noticed, and whom Wake has translated, are the only Christian writers near to the apostolic times; that is, about 60—100 years after the apostles. But even the writings of these apostolic fathers are all suspected in whole or in part, by Christian literati of high repute: they are undoubtedly mutilated and interpolated, as such we have them: even Wake has condescended to mutilation by omission. But be they genuine or not, *not one of them authenticates, or even mentions any of our existing gospels in substance or by name.* We must therefore go farther, and to still more suspicious times.

The next Christian writer in order of time is JUSTIN MARTYR. Of the works ascribed to him in this age of forgery, none are considered as genuine but his dialogue with Trypho, and his apologies. *1 Jortin. Rem. Ecc. Hist. 205.*

He affirms that prophetic gifts, and extraordinary powers subsisted in the church in his time: that the gift of expounding the scriptures was conferred on himself by the special grace of God. He says the affairs of this world could not be carried on but by means of the form of the cross. The sea could not be passed, or the earth tilled without it. That the form of a man is that of the cross by the erection of his body, the extension of his arms, and the projection of his nose. Then he goes on to apply all the sticks and pieces of wood mentioned in the old testa-

ment, to the cross of Christ. Of such silly fancies are his works greatly composed, yet does he insist upon their having been divinely suggested to him, and appeals to the Jews whether he could have acquired otherwise, such a perfect knowledge of the scripture? Yet he was perfectly ignorant of Hebrew. He declares that all good Christians believe in the millennium, wherein they are to enjoy all sensual pleasures for a thousand years previous to the general resurrection. A doctrine which he deduces from the prophets, and from John the apostle, and in which he is followed by all the fathers of the second and third centuries. He asserts that God made the world, gave the care of it to angels, who fell in love with women, and corrupted boys, and spread terror among men. He professes great regard for the Sybilline books (now known to be spurious) and Hytaspes; and appeals to them as divinely inspired writings, and says that by the contrivance of demons, it was made a capital crime to read them. These forgeries received currency from the authority of Justin and others of the early fathers. He asserts the divine inspiration of the Septuagint version. He confounded and mistook the Sabine deity Semo sanchus with Simon Magus. He is charged by Crowe (Croius) with having forged a passage in Esdras, and accused by Thirlby of the utmost negligence and rashness. He alleges *necromancy*, as a proof of the immortality of the soul. He declares the demons succeeded in exorcising in the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These and other absurdities are abundantly proved by extracts and references in Middleton's *Free Enquiry* (vide Index.) and in Barbeyrac, sur la morale des Peres, chapter 2. Is such a man authority for any thing? But neither are the gospels cited by Justin Martyr.

IRENÆUS a worthy disciple of that acknowledged idiot, Papias, 1 Jortin rem. ecc. Hist. page 310, a still more diligent collector of apostolic traditions.

On that authority in direct contradiction to gospel fact, and acknowledged dates, he asserts that our Saviour was at least fifty years old when he was crucified; that all the old men who lived in apostolic times coincided in this opinion that St. John related it to them. Yet St. John's gospel, which he could never have seen, makes Jesus but thirty one years old at the crucifixion. Whithy and Cave, do well to exclaim at this flagrant mistake, if you chose so to call it.

IRENÆUS wrote five books against heresies, and some fragments to be found quoted by Eusebius and others. Except these fragments we have nothing but an old Latin version of Irenæus. His death is generally placed in 202: the time of his writings is variously placed from 178 to 192: the mean between the two calculations will probably be right. See 2 Lard. Credib. 154. 155.

Irenæus mentions the evangelists by name as the authors of the gospels usually ascribed to them. He is the first writer, Christian or Pagan, who does so. The first clear and distinct notice of the existence of these gospels, supposed to have been written by the apostles themselves, is 185 years after Christ. About this time there existed a multitude of other gospels of nearly similar import with those we now possess. Varying in the facts related, and the conversations and sayings detailed, but whose evidence of authenticity had never been examined. Many Chris-



tians, far superior in understanding, talents, and learning to Irenæus, rejected those he has adopted, and received others: but upon what grounds some were received and others rejected, it is impossible now to ascertain; nor was any attempt made to settle this important question, and to ascertain the true from the false at any time that I know of previous to the decision at the council of Nice. For although Melito, Origen, Jerom, had formed their own selections, the grounds of choice, the historical and intrinsic motives of adoption or rejection, are no where detailed in such a manner that we can now judge of their relevancy. Irenæus seems to have adopted the general, popular, and prevailing opinion without much scrutiny on the subject. We suppose so, because he was too ignorant and silly to exercise any judicious discrimination on the subject. For instance,

He relates that the millennium would certainly occur; and this from the accounts of old men who had heard St. John give an account of it from our Saviour's relation. During this millennium vineyards shall have 10,000 vines, each vine 10,000 branches, each branch 10,000 shoots, each shoot 10,000 bunches, each bunch 10,000 grapes, and each branch shall yield 25 measures of wine. So of wheat, each grain shall produce 10,000 stalks, each stalk 10,000 grains, each grain 10,000 lb. of the finest flour; and so of all fruits, seeds, &c. in proportion. For all this he cites Papias, a disciple of St. John, and companion to Polycarp; and he confirms it by the testimonies of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Daniel and the revelations of St. John.\* Irenæus affirms also that Enoch and Elias were translated into the same paradise that Adam was expelled from. He defends the divine authority of the Septuagint. He says (wherein he is followed by all the principal fathers of the succeeding centuries) that the sacred scriptures were utterly destroyed at the Babylonish captivity, but restored again by Esdras after 70 years. Indeed Esdras (2 Esd. chapter 49) says the same thing. I see nothing impossible in this, tho' all modern divines are greatly scandalized at it. He intimates more than once the intermixture of the angels of God with the daughters of men, an opinion that maintained its ground through the four first centuries. (Whitby Strict. Patr. Gen. in chapter vi, verse 4, page 5.) For these and many more at least equal absurdities, see Middleton's Free Enquiry, and Barbeyrac sur la morale des peres, page 19, et seq. Books that no honest and impartial reader can peruse, without full conviction that my representations do not exceed the reality; and that men so childish and silly were incapable of any just and critical discrimination; and their suffrages therefore are utterly worthless.

I have strong doubts about the testimony of Irenæus. For 1st. Except some Greek fragments preserved by Eusebius, in which Irenæus cites, or is made to cite the evangelists by name, we have little else but a Latin translation of his works, of whose date we know nothing. Of Eusebius

\* Chillingworth speaking of Papias observes, that if Papias who first committed to writing the doctrines of the millennium, of angels, demons, &c. could either by his own error, or by a desire to deceive others, cozen the fathers of his day in these, why not in other things? Why not in twenty as well as in one? And why might not twenty others do it as well as he? See Chillingworth's additional discourse, page 36, 37, at the end of the seventh edition of his works.

we may say, in the language of modern exclamation, "Ferdinand Moses Mendez de Pinto, was but a type of thee, thou liar of the first magnitude!" 2. By the contemporary writers, enumerated by Lardner in vol. 2 of his *Credib.* Athenagoras 178. Miltiades 180. Theophilus 181. (except one passage relating to the Logos) Pantæus 192. Polycrates 196. Heraclitus 196, Hermias 200. Serapion 200. contain indeed a few citations similar to passages contained also in the Evangelists, but no distinct and positive reference to them, nor any quotation of them by name.

ATHENAGORAS, in his apology, says we do not deny but in different places cities and counties, extraordinary works are performed in the names of idols, from which some have received benefit, others injury. *Apol.* page 25. Origen admits to the same purpose, *Contr. Cels.* lib. 3, page 124. Athenagoras says of the prophets, that while under divine impulse, they are in ecstasy, and delivered their inspiration as a pipe or flute delivers a sound as communicated to it. *Legat. pro Christ.* page 9 edit. ad. calcem. Justin Martyr *Op.* In this opinion he is followed by Justyn Martyr and Tertullian. *Mid. Free Enquir.* 111. He was of opinion like most of the fathers that the affairs of this world were committed to the government of angels. He regarded second marriages as adulterous; a very common opinion among the ancient fathers: see Barbeyr. *ub. sup.* chapter 4, who enumerates and produces proofs from Chrysostom, Theophilus of Antioch, Clemens Alexand. Tertullian Minucius, Felix, Origen, St. Basil, Gregory of Nazianzen, and Jerom.

PHILO VERITAS.

#### DEITY.

Mr. Editor—I was much gratified with the correspondence betwixt the priest and the doctor, recently published in your highly useful periodical. Whether that correspondence be a genuine one or not is of little importance, as the arguments made use of are certainly much to the purpose—that is, they comprise all that are *necessary* for one party, and all that are in the *power* of the other to produce.

To intrude my humble cogitations may appear presumptuous and uncalled for; but I cannot refrain from asking some of the hundred of God's ministers in this city, in the words of the doctor—"to explain to me the subject of the deity." What is God, a spirit or a ghost? [angels, cherubims, seraphs, devils, &c. we will leave out of the way at present.] Years and ages have passed down the stream of time, after their innumerable predecessors, and yet not one has ever been seen by any human being; [of course, the *beautiful* and *rational* tales narrated in a book called the holy bible, are always excepted]—not one solitary *spirit* has ever made his appearance in a manner sufficiently tangible to be recognised by a man in the enjoyment of his rational faculties. And yet the whole Christian, and indeed every other system of religion depends on the alleged existence of gods, spirits, and ghosts, not one of whom has ever shewn themselves.

We are told that the form, the very existence of the universe proclaims a deity. Granted that it does, who is that deity? that is the question; talk of him, ye *reverend* gentlemen, ye ministers of his will, yea, even think of him and see if you do not give him form and extent? And can there be form and extent without matter? And a spirit you say imma-

terial? But, lest you say I am begging the question, I ask you for a rational description of this immaterial god, whose existence you say, is self evident—of a spirit or a ghost. Use language that can be comprehended by my senses, and give reasonable proof of having seen either a ghost or a devil, and I promise to accord all possible belief in their existence. But I know the only answer I shall receive: they, poor gentlemen, have never seen *even* a ghost, “their firm nerves have not trembled” at the “unreal mockery” of a thing devoid of flesh and blood, yet of human form. But then, there is still this God, this immaterial being, “whose face [he has a face it appears] no man can see and live;” though, by the by, it is said Moses once saw him in a tavern, as well as in other places.

The existence of this being, say they, is self evident, because matter exists, because we exist, because any and every thing exists, because the heavenly bodies perform their regular revolutions round the sun, because that sun gives light and heat to this globe, and lastly, because these facts betray unequivocal evidence of an intelligent, creative power.

In short, we are unceasingly told that in every movement of our lives, in the daily exercise of our visual organs, we meet with the most convincing proofs that a designing mind has created and continues to govern every material object. In reply, I would observe that the atheist, blind ignorant, weak and wicked as he is, charitably stiled by his Christian friends, sees all these surprising objects around and above him; still, in the exercise of those faculties with which he finds himself endowed, entertains the *monstrous*, the *unreasonable*, the *blasphemous* idea, that these stupendous objects of his sight, of his senses, have eternally enjoyed that existence which they now enjoy. In short, he believes that nothing (which he considers synonymous with the word spirit) never could produce something. The proof that it can or could, he leaves to the more *enlightened*, *consistent* and *reasonable* professors of Christianity.

But further, let us remember that this creating power, this great first cause of which they speak, must have its limits, must somewhere or other stop. Where then shall this point be placed! Is this nature, this material universe a cause, or is it only an effect of a prior cause or agent? This is the important question at issue, and in support of the opinion I hold, I venture to predict that a thousand ages will pass away, and the existence of a being superior to her who, we are told, it is so necessary we should know and believe in, will be equally as problematical as it is at the present day, or more properly speaking, the phantom will no longer perplex and terrify the minds of credulous mortals. ‘No courteous ghost will, indeed, blab it out,’ and their silence will be owing to the best of all possible reasons. To an inquisitive mind, to one who thinks deeply on the subject, it is an almost overwhelming idea, that any material substance whatever should be in existence. But ingeniously, what possible advantage, or relief to our bewildered minds do we obtain, or rather what real grounds have we for supposing that every thing we see has not, in some form or other, enjoyed an eternal duration of being? If we imagine a being separate from the universe, we only increase the difficulty—remove its solution one degree further from our grasp. Whence his existence? Where shall he be placed? This is the great desideratum with all those who



have advocated his existence. If they assign him a place in the visible world, they would make him subject to the laws of Nature, consequently to decay and dissolution. If not in Nature, I confess myself utterly unable to imagine his residence, to reason upon him, or to take any cognizance of him by means of the senses with which I am endowed. With these few remarks by way of eliciting enquiry, and if possible, information, on such an interesting and important subject, I conclude for the present.

And remain, yours, &c.

S.

#### SPIRITUAL EXISTENCES.

No. V.

Mr. Editor—My former numbers have been devoted to the refutation of the arguments adopted by theists in support of the existence of a spiritual creator and governor. I shall now enter upon the arguments by which his existence is not only rendered doubtful, but incompatible with itself and with Nature.

Mr. Locke, in advocating the existence of a deity or first cause, very unguardedly, but very justly observes, that the creator, God, must have had within himself the essence of all the properties, qualifications, &c. which ever after existed in his works; otherwise, he adds, they could not now exist, because something cannot be formed from nothing. The establishment of this fact, is a death blow to theism, it strikes at its very root; it is the first to be settled, and then follows the destruction of the whole fabric; and coming from so good a source, theists cannot but adopt it as orthodox. As the position is founded on the broad basis of incontrovertible nature, which is properly the only ground work of just argument, it will stand triumphant against all the attacks of theistical sophistry.

It is an axiom not only in physics, but also in metaphysics, that a being which makes from and out of itself, other things and beings, makes those things and beings in its own composite likeness; or in other words, creates itself out of itself; it cannot separate itself from itself, it is therefore but one existence. If God worked by agents different from himself, if his works were formed of materials foreign to his own composition, then would his works not be himself, but agents in his hands; but he being the first of all things, and creating all things, and being the essence of all subsequent existences, his works are himself, as being made by, from, and out of himself; they sprang from his existence, and exist only as being part of his existence; therefore all the things that are, are God, as being formed of that essence of which he alone is the life and existence. Consequently God prays to, and worships himself; he devours himself; he tortures himself; he dies and still lives; he commits evil and punishes himself; he does good and rewards himself; he does not believe in his own existence, and does believe in his own existence. It appears to me, that if there was a God, perfect, &c. that all things would act in concert and harmony; for it is very unreasonable to suppose that any being delights in discord and strife, and much more when it is directed against itself; therefore, rather than believe in a God, the author of our existences, of our sufferings, of our imperfections, re-



verting all to himself, I had rather draw the negative conclusion, and look with a more complacent eye upon the works of eternal and magnificent nature.

I cannot help noticing here, the blindness and stupidity of the worshippers of "things unseen" in their attributions and devotions to deity. To God and to his works, they ascribe infinite perfection and goodness; but to themselves, whom God declared to be his *chief d'œuvre* they attribute every species of evil, corruption, debasement, imperfection!! How gracious, how welcome, must be these praises in the ears of a "jealous God!" With what tender emotions towards his children, must it inspire him to have them continually pouring forth to him the overflowings of their grateful hearts, in acclamations of love, for having bestowed upon them such an infinity of miseries, evils, corruptions, &c. CATO.

### SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 1829.

#### LECTURES DELIVERED BEFORE THE FREE PRESS ASSOCIATION.

On the Inconsistencies, Absurdities, and Contradictions of the Bible.

By the Secretary.—LECTURE XIX.

Concluded from page 284.

In the 11th verse of this chapter it is said, "And the lord spake unto Moses, *face to face*, as a man speaketh unto his friend." In the 20th verse of the same chapter, a flat and positive contradiction is given to this assertion. It is there written—"And he said, thou *can'st not see my face*; for there shall no man see my face and live. And the lord said, behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock. And it shall come to pass while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in the cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by; and I will take away my hand and thou shalt see my back parts; *but my face shall not be seen.*"

Now, which of these stories are we to believe?—that in the 11th verse, which distinctly says, that Moses talked with his God "*face to face*;" or that in the 20th verse, where it is as plainly asserted, that Moses could *not* see the face of Jehovah without the sight producing instant death? According to this portion of *holy writ*, it is the same thing to see an object and not to see it—to suffer instant death on seeing that object, and to continue to live after seeing it! The person who could commit such a blundering, contradictory, and foolish tale to paper, and expect others possessed of their senses to believe it, was fit for a mad house. In this enlightened age he would scarcely have been allowed in some countries to walk at large.

But if such is the view we are compelled to take of this passage, considering it altogether as a *human* composition, what are we to think of it when we are told that it was inspired by an infinitely wise and perfect deity? To call such a production as this a *revelation* from heaven, is not only the climax of absurdity, but an insult to common sense, and a departure from every thing held correct among rational beings.

Towards the commencement of the chapter, Moses had the high honor of looking his God full in the face; but, by and by, we are told that he was permitted to view only the posterior parts of this divinity from the

cleft of a rock!—Christians, can you really believe this nonsense? Have you no better idea of your God than to suppose that he occupied himself creeping about the rocks and mountains—playing at a kind of hide and seek with Moses; and exhibiting all the parts, and appearance of a man? Absurd as this may appear to you, when told in *plain* language, without any of those terrific accompaniments which you are accustomed to hear from the mouths of your priests, it is undeniable, that such is the representation given in the bible of that being whom you worship, and consider Almighty. If you were to read such a description of this being in any other book, would you not reject it with contempt? Would you not consider the author of it an impostor, or a fanatic, altogether unworthy of your notice? What reason then can you assign for showing more respect for the bible than you would do for a work of that description? We have no other way of judging of the truth or falsehood of a book but by bringing its contents to the bar of reason. Even the priesthood, who, from *interested* motives, are constantly declaiming against reason, cannot move a step in their theological inquiries, without availing themselves of this sacred torch, which, if it is of any service at all to mankind, cannot be better employed than in investigating those doctrines on a belief of which, it is said, their present and future happiness altogether depends.

Moses and his God, who had so often fallen out about trifles, appear, in the 34th chapter of Exodus, entirely reconciled to each other, and united for the purpose of replacing the tables which the *meekest* of men had broken in his anger. But this resuscitation, it seems, must be done *in secret*. The people, as usual, must be kept ignorant, and all the marvellous operations and conjurations of the Jewish God and Moses, carefully concealed from public inspection.

In verse 3d, it is said, “And no man shall come up with thee; neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount.”

It is very evident from the manner in which Moses conducted himself, that he was deceiving the people; his seeing and conversing with his God, was all an imposition. If he really held an intimate conversation with Jehovah, why did not he and his God come out boldly, and bear testimony before an apostate world to the truth of their operations? But, no; they must always be by themselves on the mountain. This was more like juggling and conjuring than fair dealing. Imposture makes high pretensions and conceals much. But integrity is open, bold, and candid.

In the 6th verse of this chapter, it is said, “the lord God merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth;” and in the 7th verse we have the following illustration of these *mild* attributes: “visiting the iniquities of the fathers on the children unto the third and fourth generation.” This abominable doctrine, on which I had occasion to remark when examining the celebrated decalogue, is here renewed with unblushing impudence, as if truth might be traduced with impunity.

In the 14th verse the Jewish idol obtains a new name which had formerly been ascribed to him—viz “the lord *whose name is jealous*, is a jealous God.”—The bible makers have destroyed all rational confidence in the book by burdening the character of their God with a mass of detestable attributes—“the lord is a jealous God”—Of whom, or of what was he jealous? Had he any rival? Was he alarmed for his success?

Or was he anxious respecting the ultimate destiny that awaited him?—The fact is, the Jewish God was a mere phantom, fabricated by ignorance, and supported by roguery and superstition.

In the 28th verse, it is said, that Moses subsisted 40 days on the mount without bread or water, and that, when he made his appearance among the people, after this long fast, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. According to the heathen mythology, as it is called, the gods were accustomed to regale themselves with a liquid called nectar; and we are told, in the book of Psalms, that “wine cheereth the heart of God and of man.” It is reasonable, therefore, to suppose that when Jehovah determined on leaving his celestial abode to visit this earth, and to spend 40 days with his confident Moses, that he would take care before setting out, to lay in a stock of that heavenly beverage, in order to regale his faithful servant, who, it would appear from the text, hastened to meet the lord without the precaution of laying in provisions. Devoted, as Moses is represented to have been, to the service of his deity, the least that he could expect from him during this long consultation, was a supply of the necessaries of life; and if, unaccustomed to that sort of fare which served for food to the immortals, the leader of God’s chosen people indulged rather too freely, it will appear no way surprising that the skin of his face should shine, and that the Jews, who, probably, were strangers to the inebriating efforts of the juice of the grape, were alarmed at beholding for the first time the *ruby* countenance of their legislator. There is reason, indeed, to believe that the fits of wrath and anger with which Moses was so frequently seized, were the effects of intemperance. In a former lecture, I showed that the history of Moses bore so close a resemblance to that of the oriental Bacchus, the God of wine, that little doubt remained of their being one and the same person.

In the 3d verse of the 35th chapter, the making of *fire* on the sabbath day, is prohibited. This might answer within the tropics—but it could not in high latitudes, in a cold season, where the distance of the sun from the earth rendered it necessary to supply the want of choleric, or heat, by resorting to the use of fuel.

The remaining part of this chapter relates to a mode of taxation by which Moses stripped the people of their property, under pretence of its being an offering to the lord; also a description of the tabernacle—and many other things which have nothing to do with the moral duties incumbent on men living in society.

Five chapters more close the book of Exodus. I have read them over carefully; but I have not been able to find a single sentence in them meriting serious attention. They stand as memorials of Jewish folly and credulity; altho’ it is one of the unaccountable facts of modern times, that an age, which professes to be so highly enlightened, should accede to the opinion that this book of Exodus, and the preceding book, Genesis, on which I have already commented at considerable length, were given to mankind by a perfectly wise and benevolent deity. To me they appear a compound of folly, falsehood, and wickedness; and, as such, deserving to be consigned to utter oblivion.



## THE FREE ENQUIRER.

In the last number of this paper, there is a very intemperate note addressed to me, signed "FRANCES WRIGHT," respecting a letter which, she says, she wrote to Robert L. Jennings, and mailed to my care, but which, it is also said, was not received by Jennings, and calling on me to produce that letter. In answer to this call, I have distinctly to state, that I never received any letter addressed to my care for Jennings, or any one else, but what was immediately delivered to the person for whom it was intended; that I have not the letter in my possession called for; nor do I know where it is.

Had Frances Wright, instead of indulging, as she has publicly done, in insinuations prejudicial to my character, either applied to myself, or requested a friend to wait on me, such explanations would have been given as would have satisfied any candid person that she entertained erroneous opinions. I shall not, however, imitate her in this; contenting myself at present with a denial in toto of her harsh, unprovoked, and unjustifiable imputations.

*A New Sort of Logic.*—I am credibly informed that a certain orthodox gentleman of this city, had the curiosity to purchase and peruse a copy of Dr. Knowlton's Elements of Modern Materialism. He found its principles supported by facts and arguments so strong, so irresistible, as not to be shaken by any of the weapons ordinarily used in the destruction of doctrines. Nothing would answer the purpose short of a *jack-knife*! With this he succeeded to admiration: not even the paste-board and sheep skin could withstand the test of an argument so *keen*.

*Caution.*—As we are in possession of numerous facts, which justify the belief, that secret attempts have been made, for some time past, and are now making, to injure our establishment, we consider it necessary to put our subscribers on their guard against insidious and malignant representations, by persons *pretending* to be friendly to the advancement of liberal principles, but whose real object is to break down the *Correspondent*. We rely on the good feelings of those who have hitherto approved our labors, to aid us in the present instance, in our endeavors to counteract these machinations, by giving such timely notice of the proceedings of their authors as may lead to their detection and exposure.

**MISCELLANEOUS.**

*A Dialogue between M. Jurieu and a Burgomaster of Rotterdam.*

Concluded from page 351.

*Burgomaster.* I do not see but your opinions are as chargeable with atheism as any of Mr. Bayle's; and yet you would be terribly enraged at such a charge. Either cease to judge others, or suffer others to judge as well as you. You own you are not infallible; and yet no pope was ever more positive and magisterial in his decrees, than you are in your censures. As to heresy, it is a foolish word, to signify any opinion that angers hot churchmen, who are almost universally heretics to one another, and yet are so distracted as to set up a model for the human soul to think by. They may as well pretend to paint or to shave the soul, which has certainly a different way of acting in every moral man, as all men have dif-

ferent organs and imaginations. The persuading all men to think alike, is as rational as to exhort them all to dream alike. What would you think, Mr. Jurieu, of a mission to persuade the Negroes to change their erroneous black complexion, and become orthodoxly white?

*Jurieu.* Do I propose any thing like that?

*Burg.* What then do you propose?

*Jur.* Only an agreement on a system of faith.

*Burg.* Who are they that thus agree in systems of faith; that is to say, in a certain adjusted size of thinking?

*Jur.* We the calvinists do.

*Burg.* The papists boast as much or more of themselves; that is, every set of ecclesiastics agree to the sound of certain articles, and then fall out in explaining them.

*Jur.* I am sorry it should sometimes happen so.

*Burg.* It always happens so, where tyranny does not efface or abolish Christianity, and set up an inquisition, and consequently ignorance or hypocrisy. Besides, Mr. Bayle is a strict calvinist

*Jur.* He professes to be so; but he is not sincere.

*Burg.* Who made you a judge of hearts? You have disowned infallibility.

*Jur.* I judge him by the word of God, and by his own works.

*Burg.* I judge the same way; and yet can find no fault in him. I freely own, that I am of all his religious opinions. What now think you of me, Mr. Jurieu? don't you think that I deserve to be punished as well as he? Suppose the whole magistracy be in the same sentiments with me, are we not liable to great censure, and deserving of great punishment; what says your principle to this?

*Jur.* I shall be afflicted for so sorrowful a thing: But I don't pretend to punish the magistrate.

*Burg.* Why would you then punish Mr. Bayle?

*Jur.* For the glory of God.

*Burg.* It is now plain how high that principle would carry you, if the magistrate was not higher than you. But be assured, that, for the glory of God, we will take care both of ourselves and Mr. Bayle, and preserve both magistrate and people from his strange zeal of stigmatizing and punishing for the glory of God.

*Jur.* I hope, Sir, you will make some difference between men and the worst of men.

*Burg.* Certainly. Every man is a good man who is an honest man, and a quiet subject: We will value him much more than a proud and unquiet man, whatever fine names he may assume.

*Jur.* Atheists never can be good subjects.

*Burg.* Most that the clergy call so are the best subjects, as well as the ablest men. No man who owns the being of God, is an atheist; and I never knew any man that denied his being: and till any man does, it is false, wicked, and barbarous, to call him an atheist. As to the idea of God, I believe all men differ about it, because, I am sure, no man can ascertain it.

*Jur.* Is there no preference to be given to the Christian faith and doctrines?

*Burg.* Yes, the preference of truth ; which will defend them. Nor has the blessed and beneficent author of them given them any other preference, or external advantages ; and to say, that they want any other, is to call the truth of Christianity in doubt, which made its way without any other. It is therefore mistrusting the power and veracity of Christianity, to restrain, for its sake, any set of opinions whatsoever. Where liberty of conscience and of opinion is not fully maintained, Christianity is not maintained ; but only one faction of Christian, falsely so called, against all the rest, and against the spirit and first principles of Christianity. This state was once weak enough to enter into the subtleties, contentions, and chimeras of divines, and near being overturned by a ridiculous attempt to settle guesses and orthodoxy. A synod of doctors at Dort, by the mere dint of words and dreams, were like to have put an end to the high and mighty States of Holland and Friseland. We have since learned more wit than to sacrifice the peace of our government, or any man's peace, to the passion or maggots of the clergy. We protect them all against one another, and all men against them. As to their own subtle disputes and inventions, we meddle not with them, if they meddle not with us. They have good pay, and a clear stage ; and it is not for their credit if they desire more. If any man be a bad subject, and break our laws, we know how to deal with him, without the assistance of the clergy : and if any man be a bad believer, it is their business to convince him. But whoever would convince by stripes and terror, proclaims open war against common sense, against the peace of society, and the happiness of mankind. Persecution, for any opinion whatsoever, justifies persecution for every opinion in the world ; and every persecutor is liable to be persecuted, upon his own principles, by every man upon earth of a different opinion, and more strength. What dismal butcheries would such a cruel spirit raise !

I hope you will forgive me, Mr. Jurieu, for using you thus, with the freedom of a Christian and a Dutchman. I have a great kindness for you ; but a greater for the State : we cannot violate our best maxims, because you are angry at Mr. Bayle.

*Jur.* I shall beg leave, for all this, to present my petition : If it has no effect, I can only appeal to God.

*Burg.* With all my heart : but do not appeal to him in anger.

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*Religious freedom.*—The following Act was submitted to the Virginia Assembly by the illustrious JEFFERSON, and exhibits in lively colours the opinions of that eminent man, on a subject which is deeply interesting to every citizen of this free country.

*An Act for establishing Religious freedom, passed in the Assembly of Virginia, in the beginning of the year 1786.*

Well aware that Almighty God hath created the mind free ; that all attempts to influence it by temporal punishment or by civil incapacitations, tend only to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness, and are a departure from the plan of the holy author of our religion, who being lord of body and mind, yet chose not to propagate it by coercions on either, as was in his almighty power to do ; that the impious presumption of le-



gislators and rulers, civil as well as ecclesiastical, who, being themselves but fallible and uninspired men, have assumed dominion over the faith of others, setting up their own opinions and modes of thinking as the only true and infallible, and as such endeavoring to impose them on others, hath established and maintained false religions over the greatest part of the world, and through all time ; that to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves, is sinful and tyrannical ; that even the forcing him to support this or that teacher, not of his own persuasion, is depriving him of the comfortable liberty of giving his contributions to the particular pastor whose morals he would make his pattern, and whose powers he feels most persuasive to righteousness, and as withdrawing from the ministry those temporal rewards, which proceeding from an approbation of their personal conduct, are an additional incitement, to earnest and unremitting labours for the instruction of mankind ; that our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions, more than our opinions in physics or geometry ; that therefore the proscribing any citizen as unworthy the public confidence by laying upon him an incapacity of being called to offices of trust and emolument, unless he profess or renounce this or that religious opinion, is depriving him injuriously of those privileges and advantages to which in common with his fellow-citizens he has a natural right ; that it tends also to corrupt the principles of that very religion it is meant to encourage, by bribing, with a monopoly of worldly honours and emoluments, those who will externally profess and conform to it ; that though indeed these are criminal who do not withstand such temptation, yet neither are those innocent who lay the bait in their way ; that to suffer the civil magistrate to intrude his powers into the field of opinion, and to restrain the profession or propagation of principles, on supposition of their ill tendency, is a dangerous fallacy, which at once destroys all religious liberty, because he being of course judge of that tendency, will make his opinions the rule of judgment, and approve or condemn the sentiments of others only as they shall square with or differ from his own ; that it is time enough for the rightful purposes of civil government, for its officers to interfere when principles break out into overt acts against peace and good order ; and finally, that truth is great and will prevail if left to herself, that she is the proper and sufficient antagonist to error, and has nothing to fear from the conflict, unless by human interposition disarmed of her natural weapons, free argument and debate, errors ceasing to be dangerous when it is permitted freely to contradict them.

*Be it therefore enacted by the general assembly.* That no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer an account of his religious opinions or belief ; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities.

And though we well know that this assembly, elected by the people for the ordinary purposes of legislation only, have no power to restrain the acts of succeeding assemblies, constituted with powers equal to our own, and that therefore to declare this act irrevocable, would be of no

effect in law, yet we are free to declare, and do declare, that the rights hereby asserted, are the natural rights of mankind, and that if any act shall be hereafter passed to repeal the present, or narrow its operation, such act will be an infringement of natural right.

*The Right of Free Discussion.*—On this vital subject we have received a MS. from the pen of one of the ablest philosophical writers in this country, which we intend putting to press immediately. It will extend to about 50 pages 12mo., and be sold at 25 cents. Those taking quantities for distribution, for which it is well adapted, will be allowed a liberal discount.

*Free Press Association.*—During the continuance of the warm weather, there will be no lectures in the course of the day; but the debates will be continued every Sunday Evening in the Bowery Long Room, opposite the Theatre, at 8 o'clock.—The debate on the following question, which has already undergone considerable discussion, will be resumed to-morrow evening—viz.

*Whether is the contemplation of the book of Nature, or the study of the Scriptures, best calculated to give exalted ideas of the Deity?*

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